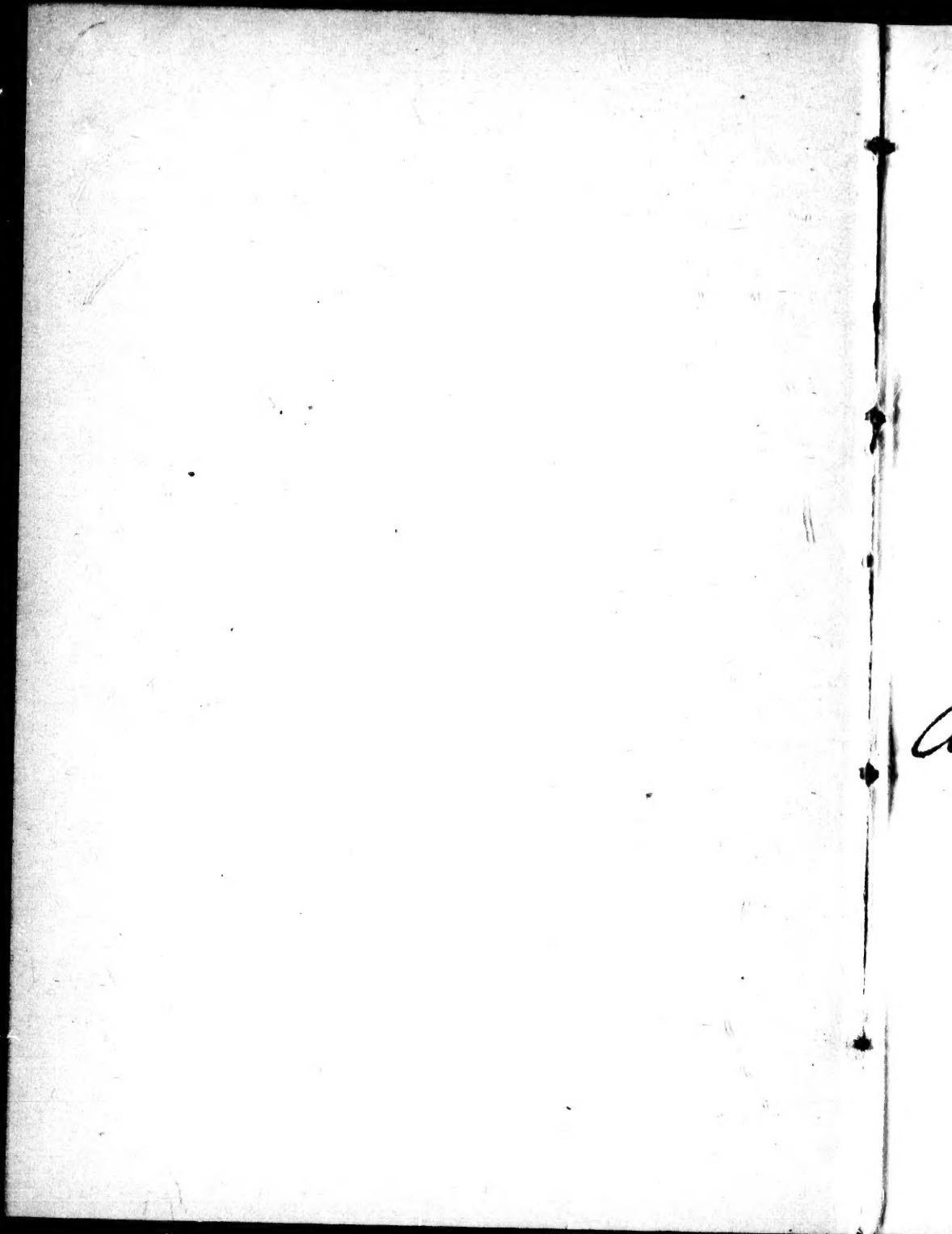




THEODORE PARKER

A series of letters



BY

ALBERT WALKLEY

Albert Walkley.



NEPONSET PRESS, BOSTON

1900

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TO
THE BELOVED FRIENDS,
WITH US AND PASSED ON,
OF
THE UNITARIAN CHURCH,
KEENE, N. H.

A. W.

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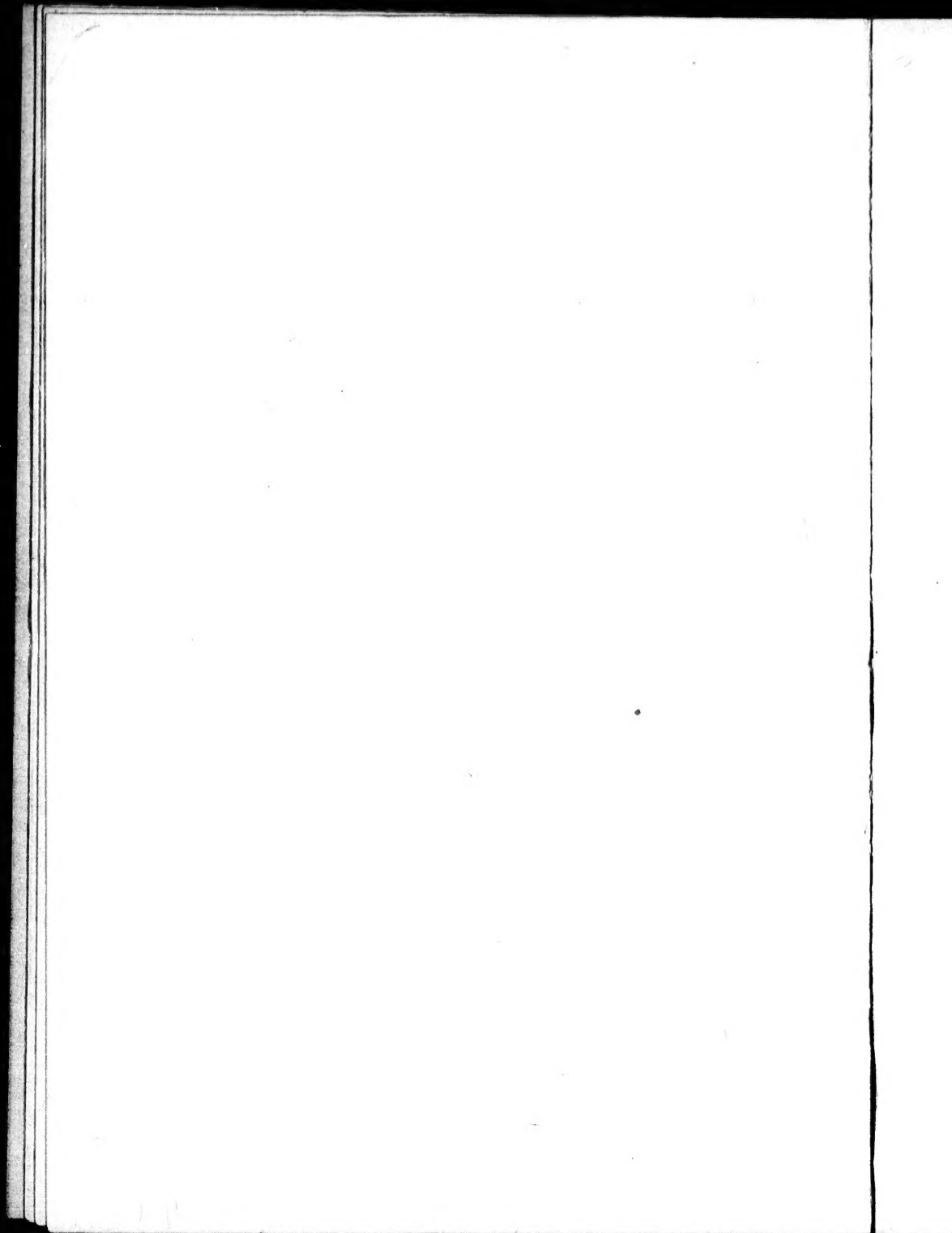
THIS little book is sent forth in the hope that it may be a stimulus to farther study of the life and character of the prophet of God sent to our land in the middle of the century now closing.

The letters, though children of the imagination, deal with the facts in the life of Theodore Parker. It is a life full of inspiration to courage and to high ideas of God and man.

The "Lives" of Parker are Weiss' "*Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker*;" "*The Life of Theodore Parker*," by O. B. Frothingham; "*Theodore Parker's Life and Writings*," by Albert Réville, D. D.; "*The Story of Theodore Parker*," by Miss Frances E. Cooke; and latest "*Theodore Parker*," by John W. Chadwick.

ALBERT WALKLEY.

November 1, 1900.



Theodore Parker.

FIRST LETTER.

Boston, May 25, 1841.

Dear Hester.

I am glad you are pleased with your new home. But of course Chicago with its 6000 people, as you informed me in your last letter, is not Boston. I wonder if it will ever be as large as our city. Of course you think it will: there is nothing like faith in one's own town.

And then it must be a comfort to you that already there is a flourishing Unitarian church in your city which you can attend. We all remember what a staunch church-goer you always were.

You say that there is some difference of thought in religious matters between the

East and the West ; that the western people are more advanced in their religious beliefs.

Perhaps so. But if you were here just now you would find some who are "advanced" enough as you call it.

For the past four years a young man has been pastor of the Unitarian church in West Roxbury. He is said to be a great reader, and especially of the works of the Germans, whose theological ideas are not suited to our staid New England churches. We of the laity have not heard much about him — if indeed anything. But it is common report that he has been for some time a thorn in the flesh of our Unitarian ministers. Drs. Robbins and Gannett are much exercised over the young man — though both of them try to be just and kind to him. I forgot that I had not given his name. Theodore Parker is the name he bears. Really if I were superstitious I would say there was something in that name to inspire its owner to strive for greatness. Think of it, Hester ; Theodore, the gift of God. I wonder if he will prove such

to mankind ! He is now thirty years of age and ripe, they say, for that age.

But I can speak now from personal knowledge and not only from "they says." Last Wednesday, the 19th inst, Mr. Parker preached the sermon at the ordination of a Mr. Shackford who was called as minister to the South Boston church. You remember the church; not one of great importance. But it is now prominent enough in the newspapers and in the street talk even. The sermon has set all tongues awagging and our Unitarian Zion is shaken as never before. Indeed, it is quite a pleasant sensation to see our church of the most blessedly contented and self-satisfied saints agitated. Now don't be offended. I know how loyal you are to our faith and its saints; but you must acknowledge that we are the most complacent and unconsciously egotistical band of pilgrims that ever set out for the happy land. Brother O. B. agrees with me in this.

But there is a tempest on hand now, and it is no tempest in a teapot. It has the gen-

vine ocean roar to it. I say again, the sensation is positively blessed.

You wish to know what stirred our still waters, our placid depths. It was Mr. Parker's sermon. He took as his subject, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity." Is not this a daring title ; for all of us were supposed to believe that all in Christianity was permanent ! But here comes this young man from the village of West Roxbury to beat down our firm walls behind which we have sheltered for ages. Our ministers, some of them at least, say that our Unitarian work is to show that the doctrines of the Trinity, Deity of Jesus, Vicarious Atonement, Total Depravity, and such like are not supported by the Bible—that's enough. If the Bible does not teach a doctrine we are not to accept it. But Mr. Parker lays the axe at the very root of the tree. He objects to being bound by the Bible. He will not have Paul or John or Luke fetter his powers and rights of thought. He does not seem to think that Paul was a Unitarian

or John either. And he says we have no right to twist their words to suit our doctrines. All this and more in the face of hundreds of sermons and tracts which try to show that every Apostle was a staunch Unitarian like the great Dr. Channing.

But if it were possible to go further Mr. Parker did that very thing. He said that there was to be no mediator, nothing between us and the Father of all. I almost tremble as I write the words.

Do you wonder our ministers and people are stirred! The common feeling is that whatever Unitarianism may be—and there is some doubt on that head—one thing is sure; it is not what Mr. Parker is preaching.

But, my dear, I will send you the sermon. It is being printed by the Swedenborgian press; our papers and publishers will not touch it. And yet the day may come when we shall see that Mr. Parker is right when he asks us to let go the transient and lay hold on the permanent and spiritual in the

Bible and in Jesus. If I am judge at all I would say that the permanent in the Christ has laid its hand on this young man.

This whole agitation reminds me of the stir made by Mr. Emerson's address before the students of the Divinity school in '38. Parker seems to be under the influence of Mr. Emerson. They both seem to be striving for the real and the divine in things. Well, I must say that I like the earnestness, the sincerity I saw and felt in Mr. Parker. More later.

Your loving sister

Dorothy.

SECOND LETTER.

Boston, Dec. 10, 1841.

Dear Hester,

You asked me to let you know more about Mr. Parker. You say you are interested.

I may say that all Boston is in the same condition. After his sermon in the South Boston church and the excitement which followed, Mr. Parker began a course of five lectures on "Matters Pertaining to Religion." These lectures have been fully reported in the newspapers of our city. Indeed one paper in New York reported them—the Tribune.

If there is anything clear in our religious situation it is that Mr. Parker sees no need of miracles to give support to the spiritual and self-evidencing truths of Jesus. He does not make Bible sayings superior to the voice of conscience and reason in our day.

I remember reading somewhere that Professor Ware of the Divinity School said that if there was a contradiction between human reason and the Bible "we must follow the written word." Now this is just what Mr. Parker refuses to do, although he says he has the profoundest love for the Bible, as indeed he seems to have.

What disturbs some of our good people is that Mr. Parker denies the miraculous character of Christianity. Our older ministers, and some of the younger ones too, say that the difference between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism is a difference in Christianity, while the difference between Unitarianism and Mr. Parker is one between Christianity and no Christianity. Now, Hester, is not this strange that we Unitarians who are not yet out of our shell and are by others deemed infidels and heretics are setting up a kind of orthodox heresy or heretical orthodoxy? The *Examiner* puts its seal on the whole thing and says, "Mr. Parker is not a Christian believer."

As might be expected the city pulpits are mostly closed against him. He has few, if any exchanges. Word goes round that "this young man must be silenced." But I think there is going to be great difficulty in silencing him. He does not seem to be made of such stuff as to be cowed by dignitaries and high sounding words.

When I tell you that Mr. Parker is of the old revolutionary stock you will not wonder at the courage of the man. His grandfather, John Parker, was a captain of a company at the battle of Lexington. He is reported to have said that if the English meant to have a war Lexington was a good place to begin it. It was in this same Lexington that Theodore was born, on the Parker's farm, on the 24th of August, 1810, and was the baby in a family of eleven children. August is a notable month in the life of this young man, for it was in this month that he passed his examination for entrance to Harvard College—a day and an event he never forgot, but which he always speaks of with thanksgiving. At

least so a friend of Mr. Parker's told Henry.

These Parkers, like their neighbors, I am told, were not rich, but plain, substantial folk. What education the young man got was obtained by hard work of hand and brain. It is said he taught school in several places when only a boy, under twenty. I have a faint recollection of hearing of him, through some Newton friends, as teaching a private school in Watertown.

Of course a man of Mr. Parker's mind—thirsting for the best—went to Harvard, or rather studied outside and took his examinations and passed. But as he paid no tuition fees he did not receive his degree with his class. However, Harvard repaired this injustice last year by conferring on him the degree of A. M. There were some who thought it was putting the laurel crown on the brow of error. Henry says that "titles are after all mantles of charity which cover up a great deal of ignorance." He may be right.

Neither did Mr. Parker finish his course at the Divinity School; for he was there

only two years and three months. My impression of the man is that he cares little for titles — he aims at the real thing.

If it is not possible to silence Mr. Parker, it will be possible to keep him out of a city pulpit, where he might, it is claimed, do considerable harm. No really respectable city church is at all likely to call him. And as we have Unitarian churches enough in Boston it is not probable that a new one could be started for Mr. Parker's special benefit.

But there is one ray of hope in the ecclesiastical heavens — that is our particular part of said heavens — and it is this: it is whispered that Mr. Parker contemplates going to Europe for travel, rest and study — if you can combine these three into one — a trinity. The wise ones say that if he goes he will be toned down, he will be a safer man; and you know, if there is anything our churches call for it is safe men, men who are expected to do no harm, even if they do no good.

Affectionately, Dorothy.

THIRD LETTER.

Boston, Jan. 23, 1845.

Dear Hester,

Yesterday I heard Mr. Parker, who exchanged with Rev. James Freeman Clarke. It would be impossible to imagine men more unlike than these two; Parker, vehement and at times bitter, Clarke quiet and always fair to his opponents.

Masonic Hall—where Mr. Clarke's church holds its services—was filled; though it was thought, where two such prominent members as Benjamin H. Green and John A. Andrew opposed the exchange, that the attendance would be small. But Boston evidently wants to hear what this new man has to say. The sermon was a good one and not over radical; the theme being "The Excellence of Goodness." Mr. Parker evi-

dently does not think that sin is the supreme power in God's world. He puts God's goodness first and foremost.

There is serious talk of some of Mr. Clarke's people withdrawing and founding a new church with Rev. R. C. Waterson as minister. If such an organization is formed it might be called "The Church of Holy Repose."

But this is not the only disturbance of late of which Mr. Parker and his preaching are the storm center.

Last November the Rev. John Turner Sargent, minister of the Suffolk Street Chapel, exchanged with Mr. Parker. If Mr. Sargent were minister of a church supporting itself nothing perhaps would have come of the matter. But this Suffolk Street Chapel belongs to the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, and in a measure represents official Unitarianism. Mr. Sargent has given liberally to this church; he is beloved of the poor, his character is spotless—he is all a man of God and a minister of Christ can

be with human limitations. But he has been compelled to resign. He is not sound theologically—and the sign of his unsoundness is that he dare exchange with Mr. Parker.

How do such things strike you? Don't you think that we too have theological tests? Do you think a church will ever get to the foundation Jesus gave: "Love to God and love to man"?

It is wonderful what excitement there is about Parker. It was hoped that when he went to Europe in '43 that he would return with more conservative ways and doctrines. But the contrary is the fact. He is more positive, if such a thing be possible; he is more determined to say what he feels God would have him say.

His year in Europe seems to have confirmed him in the belief that the church wandered early from the simplicity of Jesus. He feels that the spoiling of the life and words and works of Jesus began not in the 3rd century or the 4th; but with the very writers of the New Testament. All this

troubles our ministers. When therefore the Thursday lecture came round for last year the ministers did their best to have no lecture or to have somebody besides Mr. Parker preach it. But there was no way to get round it ; Mr. Parker took his turn and preached.

It was just two days after Christmas ; after we had sung, "Peace on earth and good will toward men" that we had "the great and Thursday lecture."

You and I have gone often enough and found plenty of room in old First Church ; Chauncy Place was not black with people wending their way thither. How good we thought we were to give our time to the service ! How we looked round to find a man in the audience and looked in vain.

But what a change when it was announced that Mr. Parker was to deliver the lecture ! Henry determined to go ; he is becoming a Parker enthusiast. The church was filled before we got there, and it was with great difficulty we got a seat at all. Men were in abundance, and there was

a thrill of excitement when the daring words came pouring forth from the bold speaker. His text was, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?" You don't get much idea of the subject from the text; the subject being, "The Relation of Jesus to His Age and the Ages." It was a clear setting forth of the human nature of Jesus. There were no half way measures in the lecture. The preacher went so far as to say that he did not know that Jesus did not teach some errors along with his mighty truths. He said, "I care not if he did. It is by his truths that I know him." My poor pen, dear Hester, cannot give you any idea of the commotion that is going on in our midst. Henry says that the ministers think of expelling Mr. Parker from their "Association"; but how they don't know. At any rate it is likely that the great and Thursday lecture's days have ended. For to have such teachings promulgated under a certain show of authority from our Unitarian churches is too much. And if Mr. Parker won't go

the lecture must go. Mr. Parker's head can't be cut off, so the lecture will have to be cut off head and all.

There is talk current that a movement is on foot to get Mr. Parker to come to Boston perhaps permanently.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

FOURTH LETTER.

Boston, June 1st, 1845.

Dear Hester,

This Thursday has been a rare June day. Our New England is glad, as it were, in the Lord and his light and air and love. The prayer last Sunday was filled with the holy spirit of Nature. Mr. Parker's face, as he prayed, seemed lighted with the glory of God and of the month of June.

In my last letter I told you that there was a movement on foot to try and get Mr. Parker to preach every Sunday in Boston. That very thing has been done. And I am glad of it. I am as an enthusiastic a Parkerite as Henry. There was a meeting of a few of our male friends—brother Henry was one of them—held, I am told, on the 22nd of January. After some preliminary

talk this resolution was offered and carried :
“Resolved, that the Rev. Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston.” Not many words in that resolution. I can almost believe that Henry himself wrote it ; for it seems to have in it some of his spirit. He says, “We’ll see whether the ministers will silence Mr. Parker—or crush him, or keep him out of Boston.” Henry has some of old Adam in him—or some near relative of Adam. He says Boston has many religions, but that he looks to Mr. Parker to help it be religious. The younger men and the progressive sort are for Mr. Parker.

Of course there was no church to be had. But Mr. Parker is not an ecclesiastic ; any place where men and women assemble to cultivate love to God and love to man is to him a temple of God, and the people a Christian church. Old Melodeon Hall on Washington Street between West and Boylston streets was the best place to be found. And it is there we hold our meetings.

Oh that I had the pen of a ready writer to

tell of the first service. It was Sunday morning February 16. We hoped for a fine Sunday, for we thought much would depend on how we started out. I might say that we prayed for a fair Sunday. But how our hearts sunk within us when on Saturday afternoon the skies began to darken. Then on Sunday we woke to find it a dark day, cold to the very bone, snow filling the streets ready to melt. And the hall was and is anything but church-like. The floors, walls and platform all tell of the different theatrical performances held during the week. Truly in that hall we have felt cold winter's chill and are likely to be burned by the summer's heat. And what an audience — a motley crowd. "What new gods hath this man?" seemed to sit on the faces of many. Some came who perhaps would not enter a church, some to hear an iconoclast rave, some to mock at all religion. But some there were in deepest earnest who believed that the outcome of the utmost freedom in religion could not be other than the highest.

If you had looked round you might have seen some reading their papers while Mr. Parker was either reading the Bible or praying. But the sermon was no word of an iconoclast. Far from it. It was about man's need of religion. He needed it, and must be religious if he sought his highest welfare, either as an individual or a member of society.

I should be glad to tell you about Mr. Parker's theology if I could. Yes, Mr. Parker has a theology, a deep one too. He does not say away with God and Jesus and immortality and duty and religion and the Bible. From his lips the word God comes with meaning and with power. He makes you feel God as the One all perfect in power, in wisdom and love. I go away from his sermons feeling how real and how good God is. His theology is a theism all aglow with life and love.

This God made man the best possible under all conditions so that man's body, mind, conscience, heart and soul are adequate to the purposes God meant for them all.

Mr. Parker makes us to feel the sacred and holy majesty of our human nature. And out of this human nature religion came—the rising of the finite spirit to meet the Infinite Spirit. And of course we feel that we owe to such a God all homage, and for love of him try to fulfil our every duty. “Father and Mother” he sometimes calls God in his effort to get some word to help us see a little into the infinite depths of God’s love.

This is enough of Mr. Parker’s theology at this time. I only know that if it is infidelity, then God send it in copious showers upon all thirsty souls.

Mr. Parker is yet a young man, being in his thirty-fifth year. But he has about him the ways of an older man. He is not at all heroic-like, or impressive. In fact I think I might say he is rather stalky in his appearance. His head is almost bald. He wears glasses. His forehead is high, his voice not at all melodious. No, the man wins because of his sincerity and the depth of his convic-

tions. He believes, therefore he speaks.

The hall is fast filling up, and if it can be done the committee is going to see if the people will not ask Mr. Parker to give his whole time to the work in Boston. At present he lives in Roxbury and is still pastor of the Roxbury society by whom he is loved and who in turn are loved by him.

You must not blame me, dear Hester, for my enthusiasm. But the sense of freedom from the half-way sermons of our Unitarian ministers is a baptism from on high.

I forgot to tell you that Mr. Parker has asked the Unitarian ministers to define their position on miracles, inspiration, revelation, salvation, Jesus and such like. Silence reigns.

Yours affectionately,

Dorothy.

FIFTH LETTER.

Boston, January 5, 1846.

Dear Hester,

A happy new year to you on this first Monday of the year—a fresh blessing from the Father from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Yesterday Mr. Parker said that it was the genius of eternity which led us to the gates of time and gave us one more year.

And what a day was yesterday in the lives of all of us who worship in Melodeon Hall! For some time it has been the purpose of our people to organize themselves into a religious society. This we have done according to law, and with the name, “The Twenty-eighth Congregational Church in Boston.” And of course Mr. Parker was called as our minister. The Standing Com-

mittee sent him a letter November 28 of last year, and I am glad to say that he accepted our call.

Yesterday, the first Sunday of the year, Mr. Parker was installed. You ought to have been present. The service was the simplest imaginable. As Mr. Healey, the chairman said, "it was without the aid of bishop, church, or minister." The minister's own conscience was to give "the charge;" and as for the "right hand of fellowship" there were plenty of us to give that and warm hearts with it. These are about the chairman's words. After we all said "yes" to the action of the Committee a hymn was sung; then Mr. Parker himself preached the sermon. He chose no text, but took as his subject "The true idea of a Christian Church." And what an idea! The preacher would have the church make us sons of man and of God as was Jesus, would have it the home of the soul, the school for the deepest, freest, holiest teaching, the inspiration to self-sacrificing work for man. Mr. Parker

asks a great deal of poor human nature ! But this much he does do, he makes you feel God's power near to help. He does make you rejoice in God. He says that the objection to much of our Unitarian preaching is that it does not make the soul rejoice, shout for joy in its communion with God.

There is no need telling you, dear Hester, that Mr. Parker is one of those transcendentalists written against and spoken against by the men of the old school of thought. Most of our Unitarian ministers are humble followers of the great John Locke, whose "Essay on the Human Understanding" we poured over in days gone by. And to Locke the only way we can know God, or have faith in immortality is through a divine revelation (the Bible), and we can only accept this divine revelation if it is properly attested by miracles, outward signs and visible acts of power. Today Professor Norton stoutly maintains this doctrine. To these men, Mr. Parker says, God seems a probability and immortality a mere possibility. Now to

himself God and immortality are the greatest realities of the universe. God's witness is in man's soul. God lives in man, and breathes into him the consciousness and joy of immortal life. This school of thought is growing. Its poet is Coleridge, its Elijah is Thomas Carlyle, whose writings are laying hold upon our younger thinkers. And one of our own Unitarian ministers in England, James Martineau has left Locke and Priestley and Paley for the new light. As might be expected James Freeman Clarke in his own quiet way preaches transcendentalism to his people. The air is full of Emerson, whose whole thinking is of this spirit. Like a star he ascends into the heavens in the winter nights and hangs over our city, drawing the eyes and hearts of our thinking young people to look up to heaven in faith for light and to move forward along new paths and toward new and high hopes. This is about the way Mr. Parker puts it. But few are drawing eyes and hearts any more to themselves than is Mr. Parker.

Not his words alone, but the whole man takes you close to the deepest realities in man and the world about. He revels in his preaching. It is not a task, but his soul's delight to proclaim to his fellows the unsearchable riches of the soul of man.

You don't understand him if you think him an iconoclast — or a mere sensationalist, or one preaching because it is his profession. He is called of God, he has a message.

And I remember in one of your letters you spoke of Mr. Parker as one who lowers Jesus, because he did not call him God, or say he was divine. I never could understand what was meant by those terms — or how any sane person could say them as part of his inner soul's creed. But I can understand what Mr. Parker said in his sermon yesterday : "Christianity is humanity ; Christ is the son of man ; the manliest of men ; humane as a woman ; pious and hopeful as a prayer ; but brave as man's most daring thought. He has led the world in morals and religion for eighteen hundred years, only because he was

the manliest man in it; the humanest and bravest man in it, and hence the divinest." With my own ears I heard these words. My heart leaped for joy as they dropped from the lips of the speaker, my reason said "Amen and Amen." I understood Jesus; I felt virtue proceed from this thought of him. It never entered my mind that there was any lowering of him. But I did feel that all our human nature was being exalted. No, dear Hester, Mr. Parker is no destroyer. Never was heart more loyal to the great Master, never did lips and tongue speak of him in truer and holier fashion.

Such is our minister and the truth he gives us. And I hope that as minister and people we are long to be together. The old hall is full and more are sure to come. This plain old congregational installation service has made a deep impression on my mind, so far from the ecclesiastical, and so near to the real.

Affectionately yours,

Dorothy.

SIXTH LETTER.



Boston, February 8, 1847.

Dear Hester,

I suppose your city is not unlike ours at present, with all the signs of war about it. We, in this part of the country, do not all approve of this war with Mexico. And among those who are most outspoken against it is our minister, Mr. Parker. He says of war in general that it is "in utter violation of Christianity. If war is right then Christianity is wrong, false, a lie. . . . It is a violation of God's eternal law of love." And in particular of this war with Mexico he says, "It is a war waged for a mean and infamous purpose, for the extension of slavery." Mr. Parker, when he speaks, calls a spade a spade, his whole soul — and it on fire — goes into his words. He is becoming more and

more outspoken against slavery and I should not be surprised if he took an active part in favor of its abolition.

You will rejoice with us in the good fortune that has come to us. Mr. Parker has moved to Boston from West Roxbury and has rented a house No. 1 Exeter Place, between Essex and Bedford streets, right back of Wendell Philips, who lives on Essex street.

They moved in January ; and as I called last Thursday, you will see that I was one of the first to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Parker to Boston. You perhaps may think I called too soon, but my excuse is that Mrs. Parker herself asked me to call. Mrs. Parker was Miss Lydia D. Cabot, daughter of John Cabot of Newton, with whom Mr. Parker became acquainted while he was teaching in Watertown in '33. She was a teacher in Rev. Mr. Francis' Sunday school in which Mr. Parker also was a teacher. They were married April 20, '37. She is a gentle woman, with whom her husband is deeply in love. This mild creature he calls "Bear," and when

I visited their home, I found that Mr. Parker had his study adorned with images of bears. And I noticed that his gold shirt-stud bore the impress of this same animal.

And that study ; it is the home of books. The books might be said to roam whither they pleased in it. Books in plain cases lining the walls ; books on the stands ; books on the desk ; books piled on the floor. Some one of the company asked Mr. Parker how he found time to read so many books. He smiling replied that "time stretches out like India rubber."

Flowers have also a place in his study and they receive the best of care from Mr. Parker himself. Few love flowers with a deeper love, or know them with a truer knowledge. I am told that his love for wild flowers is a passion, and that every year he goes out to Lexington to gather the earliest violets from his mother's grave. You will not therefore wonder that on Mr. Parker's pulpit, every Sunday, is a vase of flowers. I know this is rather odd ; for the churches here have

not yet got to where they "consider the lilies." But they will in time.

And right here let me say that in Mr. Parker's study is a Parian head of Jesus, and that by it there is nearly always a vase of flowers. He associates Jesus and the flowers; he is in love with the beauty of both. In this homage to Jesus he illustrates the two lines of his own poem :

"No wreaths nor garlands ever did entwine
So fair a temple of so vast a soul."

I noticed a little corn-crib in the library and was informed by Mrs. Parker that Mr. Parker kept his corn there for the pigeons who on these cold winter days come to the library window for their breakfasts.

But neither animals nor flowers, large as their place is, have as large a place in Mr. Parker's heart as have human beings. The children love him because he loves them. He says that each child comes as a new Messiah to cheer and bless the world of home. And he mourns deeply that he has no children of his own. More than one

young man and one young woman owes it to Mr. Parker that they can go through college or some one of the higher schools. If there is any truth to the saying that "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me," then great is Mr. Parker's reward; for it does seem to be a passion with him to try to help the least. And he seems to have just the voice to win all such. It is a kindly voice, one he must have caught from the flowers. You would hardly think it to be the voice that cries out against wrong, that denounces war, and is beginning to be raised in behalf of the slave. I do not think Mr. Parker really wishes to hurt any one's feelings. I believe that it pains him to be compelled to so earnestly condemn the theology of the churches. I believe he would gladly be at peace with the ministers. But duty calls him to speak, and he must obey. Perhaps no man in our day is more the slave of his conscience than is our minister. We are coming to know him. Not his theology only, not his eloquence, but his

large heart is winning us. We think we see into that heart, and see it true and pure and noble. I don't believe, dear Hester, that ever man had more loyal or loving followers than has our minister.

Of course we are not among the wealthy; you know that yourself. In fact, those who rest and rust on their respectability and their family's ancient history or their present wealth, mostly let us alone. It is said of Mr. Parker by these that he does not belong to the best society. Of course this means our Boston's best society, not heaven's. It is possible that the stone which the builder's now reject may become the chief corner stone in our Unitarian temple some day. Stranger things have happened.

Affectionately yours,

Dorothy.

SEVENTH LETTER.

Boston, Sept. 25, 1850.

Dear Hester,

How one loves our dear Republic, with all its faults, when one goes abroad and returns home. Home, sweet home !

My long stay in England taught me many things.

I soon learned that Unitarianism there had by no means the high social position which it has here. I might say that in England we are humble folk. An arrogant and in some respects I might say an ignorant National Church holds by its social prestige many who otherwise would stand upon their feet and let God speak unto them.

But I was consoled by one fact, and that was that with the English Unitarians our minister stands high. Among his staunch-

est admirers is Miss Frances Power Cobbe, who believes that Mr. Parker is thoroughly consistent in his doctrines. She holds that the use of reason in religion and in the interpretation of the Bible leads to his conclusions.

But I cannot say I was proud at all of my country and State when I read Mr. Webster's speeches in the Senate in favor of compromising with the slave-holders. The English Unitarians thought that we of Massachusetts should demand of Mr. Webster that he stand with the anti-slavery movement and by the speeches of his earlier days.

And here I am at home again in the very midst of the agitation over the passage of what we call the Fugitive Slave Law. Last Sunday, four days after the bill became a law, Mr. Parker preached against it. His subject was the "Place of Conscience in relation to the laws of men." There is no room for doubt as to where our minister puts himself. He said plainly that conscience called on men to obey the laws of God rather than the laws of men. "Nothing," he said, "in the world

without is so sacred as the Eternal Law of God ; of the world within nothing is more venerable than our own conscience, the permanent, everlasting oracle of God." We almost trembled, as did Felix when Paul was speaking, when Mr. Parker called upon men to reverence their conscience ; to be "not the sense's slaves, but the soul's free men." As to what Mr. Parker will do himself in the matter of helping the slave to freedom there can be no doubt. He plainly said he defied the law : "I am not a man who loves violence. I respect the sacredness of human life. But this I say, solemnly, that I will do all in my power to rescue any fugitive slave from the hands of any officer who attempts to return him to bondage. I will resist him as gently as I know how, but with such strength as I can command ; I will ring the bells, and alarm the town ; I will serve as head, foot, or as hand to any body of serious men, who will go with me, with no weapons but their hands, in this work. I will do it as readily as I would lift a man out of the water,

or pluck him from the teeth of a wolf, or snatch him from the hands of a murderer. What is a fine of a thousand dollars, and jailing for six months, to the liberty of a man? My money perish with me, if it stand between me and the eternal law of God." On the streets to-day we hear these brave words condemned. The righteous over much are shocked. The too good are ready with hands up in holy horror. The money interests would like to stop such agitations. The cry is, The Constitution must be upheld at any price, the Union must be preserved at any cost. Mr. Parker puts God first, paper laws after, and he thinks the money interests have selfishness enough to look after themselves.

The great disappointment to Mr. Parker is the conduct of our senator, M. Webster. We might say that Mr. Webster is a soul lost in the hell of unholy ambition. His course in Congress Mr. Parker thinks can be explained in no other way than by saying it is a bid for the presidency. And certainly it looks that way.

Dear Hester, do you think that we are going to have war? Is it possible that we of this land are going to shed each other's blood? And what a war it will be! Sometimes when I hear and read what our minister says I feel that a great struggle is coming. God grant not!

Mr. Parker says, "One day the motto 'no more slave territory' will give place to this, 'No slavery in America.'" There is something terribly uncompromising about our minister. He will not permit the slightest compromise between the unrighteous laws of man and the holy laws of God. Just take these words, and he is always saying something like them, "No, slavery cannot be saved; by no compromise, no intervention, no Mason's bill in the Senate. It cannot be saved in this age of the world until you nullify every ordinance of nature, until you repeal the will of God, and dissolve the union he has made between righteousness and the welfare of a people. Then, when you displace God from the throne of the world, and

instead of His eternal justice, re-enact the will of the devil, then you may keep slavery ; keep it forever, keep it in peace. Not till then."

This has to it the sound of an old prophet. One almost thinks Elijah has come back to earth. The Ahab of slavery says that these agitators are disturbers of the peace and enemies of the Union. But they return answer that it is Ahab himself who threatens the nation and that there can be no lasting peace until he goes, and go he must.

I could keep on, dear Hester, telling you of the stormy words and intense feeling in the midst of which we dwell, but I have wearied you enough. If things keep on as they are now I fear I'll have a great deal of trouble to write about. Our hall is a center to all this agitation ; Mr. Parker is one of the leading spirits ; his words are among the weightiest. And yet if you could hear him pray. In Mr. Parker's prayers one sees a different man from the one who thunders against sin in high and low places. His

prayers are like the morning sunlight before
a terrific thunder storm. Pray for the peace
of our land, dear Hester.

Yours affectionately,

Dorothy.

EIGHTH LETTER.

Boston, April 21, 1851.

Dear Hester,

We blush for our beloved city. As no doubt you have read in the papers, Boston has bowed its neck to the yoke of the slave owner. At last we have sent a black man back to the lash and to slavery. We have that honor now. Daniel Webster did it. He must be proud of his work.

New York, Philadelphia and other cities had obeyed this fugitive slave law, but Boston had not. Lexington and Concord were too close to us. Old Bunker Hill Monument is too plainly in sight, so we have thought of our fathers and their noble deeds for liberty and obeyed the law of God rather than man.

Thomas Sims has by this time got to Sav-

annah, and his back is bleeding. He will never run away again.

Twice before the South has tried to take runaway slaves from Boston, but failed. They were determined to succeed this time, and they did.

They tried last October to take away William and Ellen Crafts—who are members of our congregation. They are good Christians. Ellen is of a fairer skin than Daniel Webster himself. William is a carpenter, and a good one too. They are not the only colored people in our church. Mr. Parker calls these people “the crown of his apostleship, the seal of his ministry.” He was determined that the Crafts should never go back to slavery. More than that he married them last November, and told William that it was his duty to defend his wife’s life and liberty at all hazards. He was to kill any one who dared molest her in these. William is the kind of a man who would do it. But they are safe. The Vigilance Committee, of which Mr. Parker is the head, got them

away. They are now in England. They sing "God save the Queen" under the Union Jack. Think of it Old England stands for freedom, New England for slavery !

Last February a negro named Shadrack was rescued by a band of his fellows. The slave-hunters wanted him. But they were disappointed. He too is in freedom under the Union Jack.

It was reserved for the month of April—one rich in noble deeds for liberty—to be the time in which Boston was to bend its proud neck.

When the fugitive slave law passed it caused great consternation among our thousands of colored people. But we thought that, if no where else, at least with us it would be a dead letter. Mr. Parker himself said he did not believe it could be enforced. But he now sees he was mistaken. The law is wonderfully alive. The ministers even preach in favor of obeying it. And one of our ministers says he would send his own mother back if she were a fugitive slave, so

zealously ought we to obey the law and help preserve the Union. Some say he did not say his mother, but his brother. It makes no difference ; it is blasphemy either way.

Dr. Dewey of New York and Dr. Gannett do not stand out as great helpers to noble and daring deeds for the oppressed. They have Union on the brain.

This Union cry is a stage trick of the politicians, but these good men cannot see it.

Last Fast Day, Thursday the 10th of this month, Mr. Parker preached a sermon. He said that generally this Fast Day was in the churches a farce ; but that now there is need of humiliation and prayer. His subject was "The chief sins of the people." Of course slavery and this taking away of Sims were the substance of the sermon. He told how on the 3rd of this month Sims was seized, how he was dragged before the Commissioner, how he was condemned as a slave without a jury, how the court house was compassed about with chains to keep an indignant people away, how the militia were

called out to guard the authorities. Henry says he saw them at sunrise of Fast Day drilling, so as to use their arms not for liberty, but for slavery. The Union is saved. What a Union! What a sight! Oh Massachusetts, deep is thy shame!

Mr. Parker says that Saint Hunker is now our patron saint. He is about right. Sometimes in a vision I see Saint Hunker and Senator Webster arm in arm leading a great procession of respectables and wealthy people, church members and ministers all saying, "Away with any law higher than the voice of Congress," or "The Union must be preserved," marching on a most august procession—marching down the ages to well-earned infamy. The god of slavery will say to them "well done good and faithful servants." I hope, dear Hester, that our children's children, when great questions of right come up, will not do as we are doing, but will choose to obey God's laws rather than the statutes of men. The scourge must come! This cannot go on! Mr. Parker at

the close of his Fast Day sermon thus put the awful truth : " Bless this town by thy chastisement ; this State by thine afflictions ; this nation by thy rod." It looks as if that prayer was to be answered. How does it seem to you ?

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

NINTH LETTER.

Boston, Nov. 3, 1852.

Dear Hester,

Our city is still in deep sorrow. The death of our great Senator, Mr. Webster, touches all hearts. We feel that he was really killed by disappointment. He was great enough to be president, certainly infinitely greater than General Scott whom the Whigs nominated and failed to elect. But all his efforts to please the Southern Whigs were of no avail. They would not trust a Northern man.

Perhaps never had a man so many eulogies pronounced upon him, so much praise poured into his grave as Mr. Webster. Mr. Parker last Sunday spoke out his full mind in regard to him. It was certainly one of the greatest orations ever given on the death

of any American. It rises in rebuke, in pathos, in eloquence and power above his oration on John Quincy Adams. It was the words of a man of a clear conscience summing up the life of a man who was limited by the hard facts of life. Mr. Parker sees law as living in the bosom of God. Mr. Webster saw it as embodied in the written decrees of men. The speech Mr. Webster made on the 7th of March 1850, according to Mr. Parker, killed him. Last Sunday Mr. Parker said "Daniel Webster went down to Marshfield—to die! He died of his 7th of March speech!" That speech showed that all Webster's heart was lost in the written Constitution of the United States. To him nothing was above it or beyond it. His life did not lift him into communion with eternal things. The life of our minister is wrapped about by eternal realities. Above all that man has written, in law and religion rises God's growing truth. These two men could not see eye to eye, however much, for a time, they might walk together.

Oh, but you ought to have heard Mr. Parker! The Hall seemed transformed with the greatness of the sermon.

You must know that Mr. Webster was one of Mr. Parker's human idols. When he was a boy 10 years old he heard Webster at Plymouth. "Never shall I forget how his clarion words rang in my boyish heart. I was but a little boy when he spoke those brave words in behalf of Greece. I was helped to hate slavery by the lips of that great intellect."

Mr. Webster's picture had a place of honor in the Parker home. Many a time I have seen it there. It is not to be seen there any more, nor has it been since the 7th of March speech became public. It is said that Mr. Parker himself took it down, kissed it and put it away. And I can easily believe that this is true.

Last Sunday amid all the words of condemnation in Mr. Parker's sermon ran the deepest strain of sorrow. The preacher could not compromise with the Senator's

turning his back on freedom. Take these words : "Mr. Webster stamped his foot and broke through into the hollow of atheism which engulfs the State and church." We almost felt judgment was come.

But I say there was sorrow in every sentence. There was tenderness. Few were the dry eyes in that audience as the preacher went on. And how could there be ? Mr. Parker's own heart was almost breaking. When he came to speak of his honor and love for Mr. Webster the very walls thrilled in response.

"Did men honor Daniel Webster ? So did I. . . Did men love him ? So did I. . . Do men now mourn for him, the great man eloquent ? I put on sackcloth long ago. . . I shall not cease to mourn. . . I shall go mourning all my days ; I shall refuse to be comforted ; and at last I shall lay down my gray hairs with weeping and sorrow in the grave. O Webster ! Webster ! would God that I had died for thee !" With this there was a general

break down into tears. No, these two men could not understand each other. We feel, though, that Mr. Parker is on the side that must win. He is nearer the Source of all.

Few have dared to speak out as our minister has done in this matter. Almost all have in some way covered up Mr. Webster's sin; for sin, deep and strong, it was. He has laughed to scorn the truth that above all our statues is the law of God—the Higher Law which we as a people must recognize. No words of his were too bitter to condemn those who plead for the slave. Abolitionists were a contemptible crew.

It is over now, and may God remember that we are *at times* but dust and ashes, and then remember our Senator's sins no more forever.

When Mr. Parker speaks on the lives of men or their acts, he speaks as justice and love must speak. The acts that men are going to be ashamed of, will be preserved in his sermons like flies in precious amber—and long will they be there preserved.

There will their descendents see them as a just man once saw them.

Our hall is too small for our congregation. Mr. Parker must have a larger platform from which to speak. Now he is no longer the minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society only, nor of all Boston even. He is the nation's tribune. His many lecturing tours, in which no matter what may be the title of the lecture, he speaks for liberty, have made him and his words a matter of national concern. The Committee has determined to give Mr. Parker the platform he deserves. May God give him strength and a long life. These are times that try men's souls. What is the end to be ?

Affectionately yours,

Dorothy.

TENTH LETTER.

Boston, March 28, 1853.

Dear Hester,

Mr. Parker yesterday gave us the last sermon of a series on "Woman." There were four sermons in the series, this last one of which is to be printed; and which I will send you. According to Mr. Parker woman is "the equivalent of man; superior in some things, inferior in other; . . . entitled to just the same rights as man; to the same rights of mind, body and estate; the same domestic, social, ecclesiastical and political rights as man, and only kept from the enjoyment of these by might, not right; yet herself destined one day to acquire them all." Is not this last a bold prophecy? Do you think it will ever be fulfilled?

In the sermon I am to send you when

printed, you will see that our minister does not undervalue the domestic side of woman's life ; but that he does not think it exhausts her rights or powers. "Woman's function like charity," he said, "begins at home ; then like charity goes everywhere." Could there, dear Hester, be a higher compliment to our sex ? Is there anywhere a sentence that so well points out our way and work ? But when you read the sermon you will get Mr. Parker's thought better than I can give it. Let me know what you think of his idea that woman is to undo much of man's injustice, that the work we are doing in literature is more just, more philanthropic, more religious than that of men. I know that some of our people were deeply impressed when Mr. Parker said that since woman is a human being she has the nature, rights and duties of a human being, and she is here to develop her human nature, enjoy her human rights, perform her human duties. And he added that woman was to do this for herself as man had done it for himself.

In my enthusiasm over the sermon of last Sunday I forgot to tell you that we had left Melodeon Hall and gone into what is called Music Hall. This hall has been built since you left us. It is back from Winter street and may be entered from Tremont street through Bumstead Place. It has also an entrance from Winter street itself. It is large and airy. It has two galleries, and is in every way the place for Mr. Parker. But some of us were loathe to leave old Melodeon. Its clock even, as Mr. Parker said, was dear to us. The weather stains on the walls became precious. "More sacred," said our minister, "than the pictures which the genius of Angelo painted in the Sistine Chapel, or those with which Raphaël adorned the Vatican." The last Sunday we worshipped there was on November 14 of last year, and we came into Music Hall the next Sunday. For eight years we worshipped in the old place. They have been great years to many of us, years of uplift into highest things. The farewell was a solemn affair.

Mr. Parker took occasion to go over the history of the eight years of his ministry with us. He told us — as if it were not graven on our hearts and minds — what his work and word had been. Still it was well to hear it again. God — the very word as well as the thought — has taken on deep reality and the nearness of a friend. Man has been clothed in dignity.

God's breathing into the spirit of man, so that he is filled with largest thoughts and hopes, has come to be to us the source of all the Bibles.

Immortality is with us in the eternity of life. Mr. Parker said he preached against false ideas of God and man ; against slavery which he always hated ; against intemperance ; against tyranny in every form and against war.

When we came into the new hall he spoke of the duties of the minister. What burdens he put upon himself ! What high ideals he set before himself and us ! I can remember the words well : "The minister is to serve

the infinite duties of man, minister to his infinite rights." The closing words of that sermon went deeper than perhaps any words Mr. Parker has yet spoken — at least deeper into one heart. He called on us to incarnate the thought of God in our nature, in men, families, communities, nations and the world.

When Mr. Parker prays he makes you feel that, difficult as this work is, it can be done. There is a tenderness to his prayers that gives to the whole service a beauty, a depth and a sense of love that I get nowhere else. When he prays you feel he is speaking to God as his father, with all the love and trust of a child, and he makes you feel that you are just as much God's child as is the one praying.

The sunlight, and the stormy night, the ebbing and flooding ocean, the green hillside, the lily's cup, all flowers — the alphabet of God's loving-kindness — the clear streams of water, the bird's song, the child's beauty, the heart's longing, its sorrows and joys, man's temptations and victories ; and over all

God's fatherly and motherly tenderness—these fill his prayers. Their woof are man's hopes and needs ; their warp God's tenderness and help. His prayers are the rainbow of the service ; they are great in the beauty of light, life and love. They fulfil the old word : "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." This is a Mr. Parker which those who only read his denunciations of wrong do not get. I trust that some day these prayers may be taken down and preserved, that all may see deep into the heart of this great preacher of righteousness.

Affectionately yours,

Dorothy.

ELEVENTH LETTER.

Boston, April 5th, 1855.

Dear Hester,

Our hearts are filled with gratitude ;
Mr. Parker was on Tuesday the 3rd inst. set
free. The judge held that the indictments
were in bad form. The whole thing turns
out a farce, though it seemed tragedy enough
for us at one time.

We cannot very well say

“ My country 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,—
Of thee I sing :”

when a minister of the Gospel is arrested
and indicted because he tried to keep a poor
black man out of slavery. Mr. Parker was
arrested last November ; to be exact, on Fri-
day the 29th of the month. That was truly
a black Friday.

The whole commotion was on account of the part Mr. Parker took in the Burns' trial. You no doubt have read all about this celebrated case. It is an event that is graven deep upon our minds. Official Boston showed itself the tool of the slave power. But real Boston—the people—arose in its might and made it clear that the blood of our fathers still runs in our veins. The fugitive slave law is too iniquitous to be enforced. As Mr. Parker said, it is Daniel Webster's monument, and let it stand as his, while our other great men are without their monuments of stone. The 24th of May of last year with us will be remembered. It was on the evening of that day that our city was disgraced by the seizure of another fugitive slave. His name is Anthony Burns, a young negro who worked for Deacon Pitts in his clothing shop on Brattle street. What a stir we had next day when it was known what had been done. At once the people were called upon to assemble at Faneuil Hall on Friday evening. And according to the papers,

and Henry's account, it was an immense gathering. Some were so wrought up and indignant that they went to the Court House to rescue the prisoner, an undertaking in which they did not succeed. Soldiers and marines and artillery surrounded the Court House and guarded the streets. We were in this state of uproar and excitement until the 2nd of June when Burns was put on a steamer and taken out and put on board a U. S. revenue cutter. I cannot describe the procession from the Court House to T wharf. It went from the Court House down Court and State streets to the wharf. The streets were lined with soldiers so that no one could enter either Court or State streets from the other streets.

You know father has always been a democrat. Henry is an out and out free-soiler. When he called father's attention to the volunteer guards which the Democrat Bay State Club furnished to see Burns safely conducted to the wharf father said they were the very dregs of Boston. He called them the worst

gang of miscreants it had ever been his misfortune to behold. Mr. Parker on Sunday June the 4th, two days after the rendering up of Burns, spoke of this guard as a "leprous gang," raked from the kennels of Boston, outcasts from gorged jails, men whom the charity of the gallows left unchanged.

The truth is that in his sermon of that day he used his scourge most terribly. He put some of our prominent citizens on the bleeding backs of returned fugitive slaves to be carried on said backs down in sorrow and contempt to posterity. He called the day of Burns' return to Virginia bad Friday, not that the day was at all gloomy. On the contrary it was a bright day, a brilliant one, without a cloud in the sky.

And more than that the anniversary meetings were at hand, all kinds of societies were celebrating anniversaries of one kind or another, theological societies, philanthropic, reformatory and literary societies, Bible and Sunday school societies, free-soil and anti-slavery conventions. Amid all these relig-

ious doings inhumanity was being done in the name of the law of a Christian land. Dear Hester, are not some people too religious to be good? Have not most of our religious societies too many pots and kettles to wash for them to give time to suffering man? Has religion anything to do with humanity, or is it a kind of spider's web with which to catch fool flies? Even Mayor Smith was religious enough to be at a Sunday school meeting after he had committed a great wrong on a fellow man. But it is said that the children hissed him. Perhaps that is a sign that our children will not, when they are men and women, permit slavery in this land either black or white. Indeed the resolution passed on Friday the 26th of May at the great Faneuil Hall meeting gives us hope in that direction. Let me copy it for you. "Resolved, that, leaving every man to determine for himself the mode of resistance, we are united in the glorious sentiment of our revolutionary fathers—Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

That has an old Faneuil Hall flavor to it. It tastes good.

It was because Mr. Parker spoke at this meeting along with Phillips and others, and stirred the meeting to its depths, and because he was most active in the whole Burns matter in opposition to the authorities that he was indicted for resisting a United States officer in executing a writ. He was already for trial. But as I have said, he is free, no case was made against him. Henry says that when he saw Mr. Parker in the Court House last Tuesday he was writing and that he showed him what he was writing. It was the preface to two volumes of his sermons and speeches against slavery, soon to be published. He let Henry copy the last paragraph, and I will now send a copy of it to you.

“Perhaps I ought also to say that, pressed with other duties, I write this Preface in the presence of the Circuit Court of the United States, before which I am now arraigned as a Malefactor, charged with a “Misdemeanor” committed by speaking, in Faneuil Hall and

elsewhere, a few words against the kidnapping of my fellow-citizens of Boston, some of them also my parishioners ; and that the same man who so zealously supported the fugitive slave bill, and labored by its instrumentality to enslave men, is at this moment on the Bench to try me for resisting with a word the officer who sought to reduce a Boston man to the condition of a Virginia slave."

Henry says that literary men can take terrible revenge on those who wrong them. But I agree with Mr. Parker and am quite willing that Judge Curtis be punished.

Yours affectionately,

Dorothy.

TWELFTH LETTER.

Boston, Nov. 29, 1855.

Dear Hester,

I am glad you read Mr. Parker's "Defence." I should have sent it to you sooner, but it did not come out until August—that is, in its complete form. But you take occasion in your last letter to give us all a lecture on our bitterness, on the terrible way in which all of us Parkerites—as you call us—speak of what we believe to be the errors and sins of others. You think we ought to be more gentle when we denounce the errors of the current theology or when we condemn the slave catcher. Perhaps we ought.

You think especially that Mr. Parker ought "to tone down his language." "He ought to be like the meek and gentle Jesus" you

say. Who told you Jesus was "meek and gentle?" It seems to me that he was tender to the very people society despises, and terrible on the very saints society upholds. If people must have gentleness towards sin in high places and towards error in dominant creeds then they will have to say "good bye" to every prophet of Israel and every man of God who has moved this world one inch forward.

You see, dear Hester, I am stirred up in my defence of our minister. I hear just such complaints as yours on all hands. Men who are very careful about the feelings of the supersensitive in sin do not care a rap of their finger for the feelings of those who are trying to make men see that the creeds wrong God and that the slave-holder wrongs man.

Once a great teacher said "out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." I suppose this means that when one feels deeply one speaks out with strength. I will go farther and say that I know that Mr. Parker is one of the most tender and gentle of men.

I remember that on an Easter Sunday he took as the lesson the story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. He read on for a few minutes, when his voice began to tremble, and he broke down in tears. For a short time he had to stop the reading. And it was only with an effort he finished the lesson.

When he prays the tears run down his cheeks as he lifts on high the sorrows and joys of his people. Oh, how often I have seen the hands softly folded and that old-young head bowed in deepest reverence, and heard the voice in simplicity and earnestness raised to God.

To me these prayers, and even the strongest words of denunciation have been the bread of God. It is because our minister loves God, feels how great God's love is that he is so earnest in his word against the errors which hide that glory. He sees others taking their ease in Zion while the Majesty and Beauty and Fatherhood of God are destroyed. He knows that men need these very things, and yet are refused them. I think he would

sin against God, man and his own conscience if he did not speak in tones of thunder. They sin who speak to-day smooth words in Zion.

You say he ought to be more tender when he speaks of the officers of the law, whose duty it is to enforce the laws. Why? Has not tyranny always hid behind that very plea? Mr. Parker believes in the brotherhood of man. He is not one of those who uses lightly the words "I believe." The whole heart and life of our minister is in what he says he believes. He sees mankind wronged by unholy laws; should he be silent, or should he speak so as to be heard and understood? To be listened to in this land one needs to cry aloud. Great sins demand fierce words. It will be his great burning awful words that will be remembered when most all other words of our day shall be forgotten. They have to them everlasting fire. They are thunder bolts from God.

Oh! you say this is too far. Not so, dear Hester. There is no greater priest of God in our land than Mr. Parker. I wonder what

he'd say if he knew I called him a Priest ! I mean he comes really between the souls and hearts of men, and lifts them on high — up to God if you will. He is to-day the greatest mediator between God and man. His continual insistence of the goodness of God, of man's childhood to God, of God's care of man, and man's need of God is mediating to-day between God and our age as no other man's sermons are.

All this makes him earnest whether he will or not.

I wish you would read carefully his sermons and tell me, do they not breathe a deep spirit of sympathy with nature ? Do they not come nearer the 6th chapter of Matthew than most of the sermons you come across ?

Or read one of the prayers I sent you, there see the deep heart that is hurt by the wrongs done God and man. And when you have read tell me how such a heart could speak otherwise than as Mr. Parker does !

“O Father, who adornest the summer, and cheerest the winter with thy presence, we

thank thee that we know that thou art our Father, and our Mother, that thou foldest in thine arms all the worlds, which thou hast made, and warmest with thy mother's breath each mote that people's the sun's beams, and blesses every wandering, erring child of man." These words reveal him in his tender depths. The wrath of the gentle is the most terrible of all wrath.

These are days of greatness ; they are mighty days. They call for men of might and words of might. And instead of finding fault with our minister because he is a man of God filled with the Holy Spirit of righteousness and love, we clap our hands most vigorously when he comes down hardest on the crying iniquity of our land and day.

Now read again his "Defence." Remember he was on trial for doing what he could to get Burns free ; remember that such a thing was just what would call forth all the moral indignation of the man.

And right here let me tell you what happened on the night when the sympathizers

with Burns tried to break into the Court House ; Mr. Coburn went home with his clothes all torn and covered with mud. Think of it—quiet, aged and thoroughly Christian Mr. Coburn. He did not tell any one at the time how it happened. Only lately has it come out that he was one who tried to force open the Court House door. His sons Clarence and Norton are Whigs of the Webster kind and are for the enforcing of the fugitive slave law. Thus are we to be divided. Is it then a time for timidity, or canting, or slackness in the work of the Lord ?

While I am writing some of our people are getting ready to go to Kansas. God bless them and give strength to their right arms. You join me in the prayer I know.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

THIRTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, Nov. 7, 1856.

Dear Hester,

We are in the midst of darkness and disappointment. We had hoped against hope that Fremont might have been elected. But we are to have Buchanan—a kind of nonentity. Mr. Parker worked with his might for Fremont, though he was by no means his first choice.

His choice was (1) Seward ; (2) Chase ; (3) Hale. But now he thinks the trouble is going to end in civil war. Oh God forbid ! Yet that is the feeling here. Mr. Parker says that he is so thoroughly convinced war is coming that he is not buying any new books. And when he buys no books there is trouble ahead. For he has been known to purchase in one year fifteen hundred dollars' worth.

He says that he now needs his money for cannons.

If it must come, this awful war, we have faith in our cause and our Northern people. Mr. Parker says that if the North locks horns with the South he knows which will be crowded into the ditch.

Last Monday Sumner came home and the people turned out to welcome him. And among the most enthusiastic was old Josiah Quincy who met him at the Roxbury line. The people here are sorry for any word they may have said against our senator, who is the bravest of the brave in behalf of the slave. The blow that Preston Brooks gave Sumner, wounding his dear head, fell as a thousand blows upon the hearts of the people. As Mr. Parker says it will arouse all New England. It was felt in the mills and farms and shops. Great good will come out of this wickedness. The sermon which he gave us after the outrage on "A new lesson for the Day" went down to the very depths of the hearts of our people. One simile is worth

•

treasuring. Do you remember that he said that the bludgeon which struck "that handsome and noble head" (Sumner's) was from the "Acorn in whose shell Boston carried back Thomas Sims in 1851." What a memory Mr. Parker has, and how little things are used to great purposes by him !

And just now he is all slavery. No matter what the subject of the sermon—whether about "Franklin" or the "Education of Children,"—in comes a word about Kansas and slavery.

Since Sumner's injury we perhaps do not hear so often the cry of the Kansas-Nebraska bill or the Missouri Compromise. There is less argument and more open and silent indignation. We are not using logic now in the Kansas matter, and have not been for some time. Our friends and some of our own congregation are out there to build up, to suffer and to *fight*. They will see what they can do to make Kansas a free State. I shall never forget the times we have gone to the Providence R. R. station to bid good bye

to the Kansas pilgrims. They seemed to me to be like new Mayflower pilgrims. They went with our prayers, and the while themselves singing hymns. Some of the hymns were more orthodox than I cared for.

These pilgrims are like the fathers also in that they took their Bibles and read out of them the Old Testament parts which call on men to do battle for the Lord. And they took with them the means with which to do battle. Mr. Parker calls their rifles "Sharp's Rights of the people." I have also heard him speak of these rifles as "indispensable missionaries and apostles to the gentiles." So you see we are in earnest. When he preached on "Franklin" in September last, instead of reading a lesson from the Bible, he read a letter from Rev. Ephraim Nute, our minister in Lawrence, Kansas. Mr. Parker called it a "new Epistle from St. Ephraim." You see therefore that we have come to recognize that the contest in Kansas is no longer one "of ballots, but of bullets." Even our legislature is moving. The prisons

of Massachusetts can no longer be used to detain escaped slaves. When the contest does come this dear old State will be to the front. I am getting back my faith in our beloved city and our State. Our hearts are warming up.

Have you ever seen John Brown? I'd like to get a glimpse of him. He has been in Boston. But when he comes, he does it so quietly that the public know little or nothing of his coming or going. But this much I do know that he and Mr. Parker are heart to heart in this work, and that Mr. Parker is furnishing him with money and rifles. Or perhaps I ought to say that our "Emigrant Aid Society" is doing it. But it is one and the same thing.

The old Calvinist that Brown is and the free believer that Mr. Parker is does not keep them apart in their sympathies for humanity. They seem to be of the same stock. But does not this show that our creeds are not very deep after all — whether Calvinistic or Unitarianistic?

Mr. Parker works day and night. He is doing the work of half a dozen men. He is burning the candle at both ends. He has the blower up at the fire-place all the time. The fuel will soon be gone. He is only in his forty-seventh year. As you remember August 24 is his birthday. But when I see him in the pulpit, oh how much older he looks ! His head is bald and his beard white, or almost so. He is giving his life to his work in a terrible sense. For the future he will have to give up much of his lecturing. The Watertown work, which he took up last spring, will soon have to be given up. Every Sunday afternoon he drives out there and preaches the same sermon which he gives us in the morning. And what is he paid for it ? Nothing, save the gratification of his love for preaching and work.

And in the midst of all this work he comes to our homes a real pastor. His words strengthen us in temptation ; they soothe us in sorrow. They are balm to our wounds. The open secret is that he brings God with him.

I dread this winter for him. Last winter and spring were hard enough on him. He took heavy colds on his lecturing tours, which told too plainly what the end is to be. We hide this from ourselves as much as possible ; but it is only make-believe after all.

Affectionately yours,

Dorothy.

FOURTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, July 15, 1857.

Dear Hester,

Last Sunday, not the unexpected, but the long expected happened. Mr. Parker must rest from preaching. I believe he so likes to preach that he would keep going all summer if the people would let him. I remember him once saying, "I delight in writing and preaching. No poet has more joy in his song than I in my sermons." Preaching to him, he says, is a good medicine. He is helped, he claims, when he can look into the faces of the people. In spite of ill health, all this year and the greater part of last, he has kept on preaching, when he ought to be in his bed. He is so in love with speaking to men in public that he has for the last ten years given not less than eighty or a hundred

lectures each year. This could not result in anything else but a break down. His lecturing tour in the early part of this year through the State of New York broke him down completely. He came home exhausted from the trip about the middle of February and had to give up altogether in the early part of March. He was sick with typhoid fever. It was feared that he might be taken down with either lung or brain fever. He claims that, though he was near death's door, he was let off easy. He has promised to give up trying to lecture, and to confine himself to the pulpit and the press. Of late he has been preaching when he could hardly stand, and I noticed that often he held to the desk with his hands. He would seldom venture to lift both hands off of it at once.

And when the service was over he would have to be assisted to put on his coat, and and then taken home in a carriage. In the hope that he could be persuaded to take a vacation the parish, at a meeting held on Sunday April the fifth, voted to increase his

salary to two thousand five hundred dollars a year and to grant him a six months vacation in which to go to Europe. But no, he would not listen to the vacation matter ; nor would he take all of the salary offered him. He says that such kindness is so good medicine that he need not take all that is prescribed.

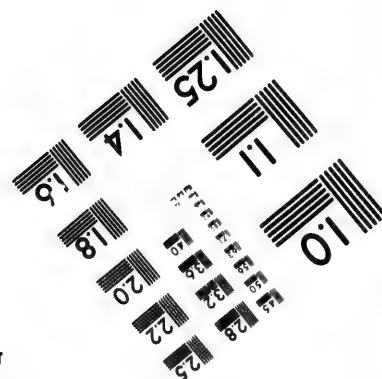
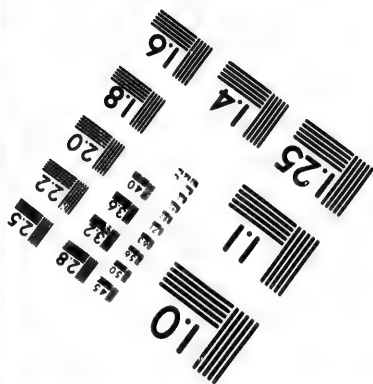
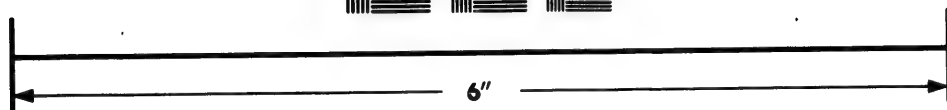
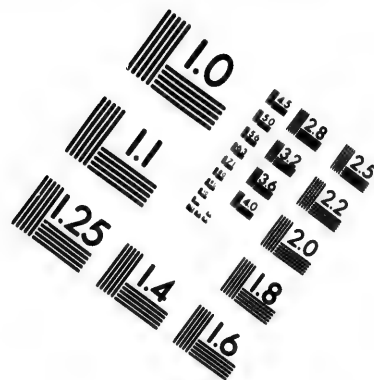
It is hoped that we may resume services in September, but all depends on Mr. Parker's health. But we all know that only one of his brothers and sisters is living. They all died before they reached the age of fifty. This makes his chances very poor indeed.

But work he must. His brain and pen are always going. If it were his sermons alone, they it should seem, would keep his brain doing its utmost. But add to the sermons, newspaper and magazine articles, and lectures, and letters. It does seem as if the people from all over the country thought Mr. Parker had nothing to do but to write letters. Being a minister he, of course, has very little to do, he has so much time he

needs some one to help him use it up. Now that is the way some people evidently think, so that Mr. Parker's letter writing is incessant. From all kinds of minds he receives letters, and answers them too. Now it is a farmer who has read one of his sermons or possibly several of them, who asks for further light. Or it is a lone New England woman out West who would like a word of consolation. The blacksmith writes to thank him for his noble, daring words. Hale (I mean Senator Hale of New Hampshire), and Chase and our own Sumner are among his constant correspondents. The scholars in Germany or England send over the ocean now and then a letter to the once despised preacher of Boston.

How he answers all of them I cannot see. And no doubt they are as full of wisdom and strengthening words as his sermons and prayers. I know for certain that some of them are, for S—— let me read some of the letters he sent to her when she was abroad. How playful and hopeful they are in spite





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of the undercurrent of sorrow which runs through them. In spite of all their words they reveal the fact that the writer feels that he is not the strong man he'd like to be.

They have the same manly tone that always attaches itself to his sermons.

Lest it should happen that we should not hear our minister again, that he has finished his course, let me say one thing about his sermons. It is a word of his own I will use, but I will make it mine. His only fear in preaching has been lest he should preach below our feet. He dare not and be true to himself lower the dignity of the pulpit, the grandeur of the sermon. Great have been his themes, but plain and simple have been his words. The every day words in which men think and talk, scold and make love, and pray, are those he uses—though at times he has used “words of learned length.”

But simple as may have been his words there was no trifling, no catering to the unthinking or unfeeling.

Perhaps Lowell does not do our preacher full justice. We are sensitive about even Lowell making a bit of fun at his expense. But since he brings in Emerson and Bryant and Whittier we cannot much complain. Nevertheless his description of Mr. Parker, his words about the earnestness of our minister are worth reading and they do really give Mr. Parker's spirit. Take the last lines where he says,

"There's a back-ground of God to each hard-working
feature,

Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaceed
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest:

You forget the man wholly, you're thankful to meet
With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,
And to hear, you're not over-particular whence,
Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense."

How do the people take to the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court? We are determined here to see, if we have an opportunity, whether a colored man has any rights a white man is bound to respect.

The financial outlook here is not hopeful.

There is considerable talk of worse times coming. Some of our people look for a blow to come from the West. We have not quite the faith in the Banks of the West that we have in our own. All together, between slavery agitations, Supreme Court wrongs to the negro, the financial outlook, the prospect of war and Mr. Parker's illness, I cannot say that the sky looks bright. But we will pray that some of these clouds may before long be banished from the heavens and that we may have again overhead the clear blue sky.

Yours affectionately,

- Dorothy.

FIFTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, April 13th, 1858.

Dear Hester,

It is not because our minister is not our chief concern that I have not written you of late ; but I thought it would only add to your burdens, which are already great, if I told you of our distress.

We are suffering from the financial depression ; and our sorrow is heavy when we see great and old firms falling into ruin about us. Of course our scape-goat are you people of the west. And you blame us for asking such high rates of interest.

But I presume that with economy we shall be able to get along. And thus perhaps we are receiving a blessing in disguise. Economy is the rule. And with economy has come a great desire for prayer. We have

passed through a great "revival," and are still somewhat in its midst. Men take to religion of a certain sort when business is dull.

Old Park Street Church was the headquarters for this revival, and in March it seemed to have reached high water mark. At least so it seemed to us. For on Saturday the 6th of March the good people of that church made Mr. Parker the chief subject of their prayers. Perhaps their reason was that the revival was not "converting" as many people as was hoped for. "The Daily Bee" of March 17th gave us reports of these prayers. That paper is not in agreement with Mr. Parker, but it says that religious people ought to show sense, and that some of their prayers are an extraordinary manifestation of anxiety for the spiritual welfare of others. In reply to this interest in himself Mr. Parker has preached two sermons: one on a "False Revival of Religion," the other on a "True Revival of Religion." Truly there was righteous indignation and an appeal to the nobler man in those sermons. On those two Sun-

days, April 4th and 11th, Music Hall heard plain speaking.

Mr. Parker told us of one of the good brethren praying that God would put a hook in his (Mr. Parker's) jaws so that he might not be able to speak. Indeed these prayers are among things "fearfully and wonderfully made." It was Saturday so one brother prayed that the good Lord would visit Mr. Parker's study and cause such confusion that he could not finish his sermon for the following Sunday. Another brother asked God to keep the people away from Music Hall and somehow get them over to Park Street Church. A more thoughtful pleader prayed God to meet Mr. Parker as he did Paul of old, to throw a great light about him which would bring him trembling to the earth and make him an able defender of the faith which he has so long labored to destroy.

Among these earnest men was one with a possible sense of humor ; for he plainly told his God that if he did not take the matter in hand himself there was no telling what

might happen to Boston. He told the Lord that they could not argue with Mr. Parker ; he was too much for them, and the more he was preached against the more the people loved him and flocked to hear him.

Now Mr. Parker would be glad if Boston were stirred to its foundations by a true revival of religion. But he does not like these manufactured revivals. He longs for a real outpouring of the spirit of God. He said that he believed that such revivals as the one in Park Street Church do harm. They turn thoughtful men away from religion, and they fasten on those who are influenced by them a false theology. In his sermon he asked this question : Supposing every man, woman and child were converted to the church theology, would it abate war, political corruption, slavery, selfish antagonisms in society, or the degradation of woman ? He answered, No. He calls for a revival which is the outcome of the earnest work of righteous men. "A revival of piety, a new power of love to God

and love for all his laws ; a revival that would turn forts into pleasure grounds, arsenals to museums, jails to hospitals ; not a gallows in the land, no slavery, black or white, no murder, no theft ; poverty ended, drunkenness banished, justice, truth, human love everywhere and forever." This is the revival the nation and all are in need of. But in order to such a revival those who promote it must know the infinite God as One perfect in Power, perfect in Wisdom, perfect in Justice, perfect in Holiness and perfect in Love. Thus knowing Him we shall love Him and His laws, and persuade others to the same.

It is the man who thus preaches who must be removed, and for whose removal prayers are offered. Oh religion how thou art made to offend God and man !

But I fear these prayers may after all be answered. There was some doubt whether we should open again in the fall of '57. We began services in September with fear and trembling. And it is in the same spirit we still continue. I look for Mr. Parker's

breakdown any day. But even should the time come when the great voice is silent, his printed word will still preach the living gospel. You may be glad to know that Mr. Parker's two sermons on Revivals have sold wonderfully. I will send you copies so that you may read them for yourself. Pass them around. They will do good.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

SIXTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, February 4th, 1859.

My dear Hester,

How can I tell the sad story !

Our hearts are heavy ! Our beloved minister has gone to seek the priceless blessing of health. The doctors tell him he has one chance in ten. He goes with this slight hope.

Yesterday was a sad day when we saw Mr. and Mrs. Parker and their little company leave us for New York whence they are to sail for the West Indies. It has been a long struggle.

The decisive moment came January 9th. We were assembled as usual in Music Hall, waiting for Mr. Parker's coming. But instead there came a note from him which told how that morning early, at a little past four, a slight attack of bleeding in the lungs came

to him. The grief that rested upon us was deep and real. The sermon he had ready for us was on "The Religion of Jesus and the Christianity of the Church ; or the Superiority of Good-will to men over Theological Fancies."

At once we held a meeting of the Parish and voted to continue Mr. Parker's salary for one year, and more if necessary, provided he seek rest, and go in pursuit of his health. The last sermon he gave us on Sunday after the New Year clings in blessings to the walls of Music Hall. It was indeed a call to noble living. It was the one great lesson he has always been preaching. It was of God's perfect goodness ; of his infinite father and motherhood he spoke. All this calls us up higher. The text was, "Friend go up higher." I hear the sweet voice in feebleness uttering the last words : "Let you and me not be disobedient to the heavenly vision." But to still farther impress us with the gospel God gave him to proclaim Mr. Parker has had printed the last sermon he preached to us,

and also the one he was to give us on January 9th.

All during the year '58 it has been in feebleness and much pain Mr. Parker performed his duties as minister of our Society. In August the Society urged him to prolong his vacation ; for we wished him restored, if possible, to health. We said he owed this to his family, friends, humanity and religion,

In that same month Mr. Joseph Lyman took him for a 700 miles drive through New England and New York. It was hoped that such an out-door drive would build him up in strength. But in October he was pulled down by a surgical operation, and in December he injured himself while getting on the train which he was taking in order to attend a funeral some thirty miles from the city.

In the midst of all this he must needs deliver certain lectures. Early in the summer he went to Pennsylvania to deliver a course of lectures to his old friends of Chester Co. And marvellous lectures they were. Then in October he began a course before our

literary society. The subject was "Historic Americans." And for these he chose Franklin, Adams, Jefferson and Washington. He never finished the course. How could he ?

Exeter Place looks lonely. I was there to-day. I was in the library ; not the first time, but the saddest. Again I marvelled at the great array of books, and wondered how one man could make use of so many. I am told that there are perhaps 14000 volumes in Mr. Parker's library. Great tomes rise in their dignity before you—the fathers of the church and the great Greeks, Aristotle, Plutarch and others. Choice little volumes of the classics, not as large as the palm of your hand, keep close company to these dignified tomes. Not only the Greek and Latin classics are there, but Italian, Spanish, Arabic and Dutch. Oriental and Occidental stand side by side upon the shelves. Not even Russia is forgotten. The French authors are in abundance ; and as for the German, one might say there are in the library as many books in that language as in the

English. Mr. Parker drank deep at the German fountains. Rich beyond compare in pamphlets on the subject always near Mr. Parker's heart, that of slavery, is his library. The future historian is likely to dig into this mine some day. The dictionaries and grammars of many languages give the library great value. It is perhaps these which make it so precious in the eyes of scholars. I am told it is strong in history and literary criticism. But what one feels most is that Mr. Parker has a passion for books beyond his contemporaries in our land. I pray he may be spared to again wander in these rich fields of thought, old and new and of many lands.

But should we never look upon his dear face again there remains to us a bit of consolation in Mr. Cheney's crayon of him. In '53 Mr. Cheney made portraits of both Mr. and Mrs. Parker. It was truly a work inspired of love ; for it was Mr. Parker awakened the religious life of Mr. Cheney. In the portrait of our minister we see the man in his more gentle spirit ; and as for Mrs.

Parker, she is there in her simple New England beauty.

How the letters poured into Exeter Place when it was known that Mr. Parker had failed in health and was to leave Boston. Sorrow has its consolations; it reveals the deeper depths in our poor humanity. One would hardly think our bold preacher could have so many friends. But there is the fact; he has them by the hundreds, I was going to write thousands.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

SEVENTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, June 12th, 1859.

Dear Hester,

I am glad to be able to write you that the Twenty-eighth Society still lives. The voices that we hear are great, though they by no means are to us what Mr. Parker's has been. On February 13 we had Mr. Ralph W. Emerson—a voice to charm. Mr. Parker always looked up to Mr. Emerson as a master. To him he dedicated his "Ten Sermons" "with admiration for his genius and with kindly affection for what in him is far nobler than genius." In March we had Geo. W. Curtis whose smooth, great periods were in contrast with the torrent of our minister.

Often do we hear from Mr. Parker—perhaps he has us too much in his mind. In a

letter to Mr. Manley, which many of us were permitted to read, he tells us that no distance can really separate him from us. His letters home all tell the same story of his love for us ; and only we know how deeply it is returned.

In March he sent us from Fredericksted, Santa Cruz, one of his old sermons which he had printed. I remembered it well enough. It was preached to us on a hot July Sunday in the year '55. Mr. Parker was in the midst of a series of sermons which tried body and mind of preacher and people. On this Sunday he gave us this "Nature Sermon" in place of one in the series, which he now sends us. And with the sermon he sends us a letter which we may call a "Nature letter." In the letter he talks with God through the stars. Speaking of the night in Santa Cruz he says : "The sun is scarcely out of sight, and not only the planets—Jupiter, Mars—appear, but the larger fixed stars, as Sirius and Arcturus, with handsome attendance have kindled a new day ; then all the

lesser sons of heaven, the common people of the skies, rush into the field with democratic swiftness, and yet without indecorous haste. The Great Bear seems like a constellation of twinkling moons. Here too are stars I never saw before ; on the Southern Cross beauty is forever lifted up for the benediction of the world." Sick or well, it is the same restless mind, yet ever in high communion.

This love of Nature one can easily believe came to the boy on the Lexington farm. Only a short time ago I drove out there ; a little more than an hour's drive. It is a rough farm indeed, but from its little hills a broad sky spreads itself out. And as we drove along the narrow roads with the great trees on either side, it was not difficult to imagine that these trees, bending their tops over the boy's head, baptized him with his deep love for Nature. When we looked all about us we felt it was no unfit place for him to be born who was to strike off from the American giant the ecclesiastical chains that had bound too long this growing people.

What is just now filling our minds and hearts is a long letter — in fact a book, a kind of autobiography — from Mr. Parker to our Society. It has just been printed by the Standing Committee. It is a kind of full opening of our minister's heart. He goes over the work he has done. He tells of his coming to us, of his hopes and fears, of the gospel he has tried to preach, and of the opposition he met with. His own deeper life from boyhood reveals itself. It is for us a living picture of our minister.

This letter is in answer to one from our Society to Mr. Parker. Back in January when we saw we had to give Mr. Parker up we prepared a letter in which we tried to open our hearts to him. We kept it as quiet as possible, and in a private way got three hundred and more to sign it. We feared to let Mr. Parker have it before leaving and gaining some strength. It was handed to him on the 6th of last March and after he had read it he was heard to say that it so moved him that he did not recover from it.

all night. The 6th of March was a Sunday, so that Mr. Parker had us with him that day in Santa Cruz. We have heard since that he thinks we over rate him, but if so it was the outpouring of our love.

Well in reply to our letter came this long one from Mr. Parker dated Fredericksted, April 19.

As we read the closing words we bend our heads, we imagine the hands of our minister are streached out over the congregation, we hear the voice as it blesses in the name of the Infinite Father and Mother, and we think the face lighted with a heavenly glory.

We have been told that this letter was written with bloody tears and great pangs. So be it. It is worthy of it.

Word has come to us that Mr. Parker, who left the West Indies on the 16th of May last, arrived in Southampton on the 1st of this month. A glad welcome awaits him in England from some of his truest friends. Our only fear is that he will do too much.

We hope he will quench his fires and rest his hammer and anvil.

We understand that he is not to remain long in England, but that he intends going to the Continent some time this month. He is consult with one or more of the physicians of Paris. But if the doctors of Europe do not agree any better than do our own, there is little hope for our minister.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

EIGHTEENTH LETTER.

Boston, April 14, 1860.

Dear Hester,

You ask in your last letter why I have not kept you better informed about the doings of our minister. Please don't for a moment think we have forgotten him. But I thought that perhaps it would be better to devote one letter entirely to him, and so let you have all the news we have from him.

Perhaps I ought to begin by telling you that Mr. Parker's stay was short in England. He went to Paris where he remained a few days. While there he consulted the celebrated Dr. Louis, from whom he received little help or encouragement. From Paris he went to Montreaux, Switzerland, and lived there from June until well into October, except that he spent the greater part of the

summer with Professor Desor in his mountain retreat, which is about a day's drive from Montreaux. This visit he enjoyed in company with literary men and scientists who were also guests of the good professor. You perhaps know that Professor D. is one of our minister's dearest friends.

It was however to Rome his eyes were turned, and thither he went about the middle of October. But if he finds that the climate of that city does not agree with him he says he will "pull up stakes and push off for some other place."

We don't find much difficulty in learning of Mr. Parker's doings, plans and hopes; for now that he is not writing sermons or lectures, he puts his whole life into letters to his friends. And what letters; some of them would make pamphlets. They are almost at times lectures on the ways of the people, or on the history and archeology of the places he visits.

One letter among others came to our Society. It was Mr. Parker's resignation as

our minister. He urged us to call some one in his place; for, said he, occasional men will not serve us as well as a minister of our own. Of course we refused to accept the resignation; Mr. Parker is still our minister. We still hope, though we must know that it is a vain hope. Indeed Mr. Apthorp in a letter to Mr. Lyman does not paint for us a very bright picture of our minister's health. In fact it tells the sad story of his gradual decline.

In Mr. Parker's own letters we learn that the climate of Rome is not at all what suits one with weak lungs. He writes that the climate is most fitful; it is the dampest city he has ever been in, and on the whole does not use him well.

Nor does he seem to think much better of the Pope's government than he does of the city's weather. He calls Rome the "melancholy city," and sends a letter to Mr. Manley dated,

"Chief City of Ecclesiastical Humbug,
Jan. 6, 1860."

In a letter to good Freeman Clarke he says: "Really the capital of Christendom is the stronghold of the Devil." Of Pius IX he has a very poor opinion, and sums up his feelings thus: "Rome is utterly foreign to me and mine. I abhor its form of religion, which is only ceremony. I despise its theology, and find little to respect in its lying, treacherous and unreliable inhabitants. It is a city of the dead." It is not likely that when our minister dies the Roman Catholic bishop of Boston will have the Cathedral bells tolled, as was done when Channing passed away.

But not Rome and its sorrows and wrongs alone fill Mr. Parker's mind. Our own land and its sorrows and sins weigh heavily upon his mind and heart. The great sin of slavery still comes in for his indignation. Since the hanging of John Brown Mr. Parker thinks that only by the shedding of the white man's blood can slavery be put down. In his letters he pours out his soul in condemnation of this crime.

Deeper than any others sink into our hearts his words about himself. And they are words that give us no hope of his recovery. Mr. Parker is a man to whom life is precious. He loves life for its opportunities to work. In his long letter to our Society and which has been printed under the title, "Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister," he tells us how hard it was for him to say Farewell, "it has its bitterness to one not eighty-four, but forty-eight." And now some of us have seen a letter from him to George Ripley. I was permitted to copy it, and I will here give you its closing paragraph. It was written from Rome last February. "O George, the life I am here slowly dragging to an end — tortuous, but painless — is very, very imperfect, and fails of much I meant to hit and might have reached, nay should, had there been ten or twenty years more left to me ! But on the whole it has not been a mean life, measured by the common run of men ; never a selfish one. Above all things else, I have sought to teach the true idea of man, of God,

of religion, with its truths, its duties, and its joys. I never fought for myself, nor against a private foe ; but have gone into the battle of the nineteenth century and followed the flag of humanity. Now I am ready to die, though conscious that I leave half my work undone, and much grain lies in my fields, waiting only for him that gathereth sheaves. I would rather lay my bones with my father's and mother's at Lexington, and think I may, but will not complain if earth or sea shall cover them up elsewhere. It is idle to run from death !”

You must not think, dear Hester, that sad as these words are, our minister forgets the kind care and the cheer of the company of his friends, who are with him even in his sorrow. The list of these friends would be a long one if I were to write down the names of all of them.

A great heart, a great mind made for a great work must say, “I have finished my course ;” and it is a hard thing to do.

Affectionately, Dorothy.

NINETEENTH LETTER.

Boston, June 3rd, 1860.

Dear Hester,

Perhaps what my pen has to write could not better be done than on this quiet Sunday afternoon. Today Mr. Parker's old friend, Rev. Samuel J. May, spoke to us. And of course the subject of the discourse was Mr. Parker himself. In my last letter I told you that Rome and its wet weather did not at all agree with him, so that sick as Mr. Parker was he left that city and reached Florence about the last of April. To his friend Desor he said he must not die in Rome and leave his bones in that detested soil. If in his own free country he might not be buried, then he must find his last resting place in some other free land.

After reaching Florence it was evident to

all that the end was near. And among those who were with him in his last days was Miss Frances Power Cobbe, who owes so much to Mr. Parker's printed word. Though they had long corresponded with each other, and were one in their religious thought, yet they had never met until these last days in Florence.

And what living consolation came to our minister from the words of Miss Cobbe ! I want to tell you of a few of his last sayings. "Of course I am not afraid to die, but there was so much to do."

Miss Cobbe said to him "You have given your life to God — to his truth and his work, as truly as any old martyr of them all." "I don't know," the dying prophet said, "I had great powers committed to me ; I have but half used them."

Amid all, in consciousness and in unconsciousness, Boston and his friends were in his mind ; his library and our Society filled his passing visions. In a great moment of prophetic insight and power, and a moment

of clearest consciousness, bright with divine light this son of God saw the travail of his soul, and said to the friend of his bedside, "I have something to tell you—there are two Theodore Parkers *now*. One is dying here in Italy; the other I have planted in America. *He* will *live* there and finish *my* work." What sublime faith! Many true words have come to us from our minister, Music Hall and Melodeon Hall have heard his words of power, but never did he speak a deeper truth than he did when dying in far-off Italy.

The 10th of May came when our minister fell into that deep sleep that comes from God, once to all of us. It was a gentle death; a May day sunset that fell that Thursday upon Florence and Mr. Parker.

On the next Sunday (the 13th) at four o'clock in the afternoon the body was quietly taken to the little Protestant Cemetery outside the city. The Beatitudes were read, they being an all-sufficient service. The holy and deep thoughts of those present were

laid upon the grave as bright flowers of love.

We are told that a simple marble slab, with Mr. Parker's name, and with the dates of his birth and death, on it, is all that is to mark the resting place of our minister. This of course is just what he would himself desire.

Immediately after the service today the Society passed resolutions in which we feebly tried to give expression to our loss. What poor things words are at times !

Next Sunday we are to hold a service of commemoration of the death of our minister. Of this I will write you in my next letter.

But already have words of praise been spoken. At the session of the Anti-slavery Society held last Thursday, Wendell Phillips spoke most fitting words about Mr. Parker. He said that when some Americans die their friends tire the public with excuses for their mistakes, stains and spots. "We need no such mantle for that green grave under the sky of Florence; no excuses, no explanations."

Mr. Garrison said that Mr. Parker's theol-

ogy, so simple in its faith of One God of infinite love, suited him. And generous James Freeman Clarke said that Mr. Parker's work was to "raise men to God." He spoke of the tender feminine heart of our minister. "He was as docile as a child to the touch of love." You see that already others begin to water the trees of Mr. Parker's planting. No doubt, dear Hester, I have wearied you by this time. But out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh and the pen writes. And our hearts are full. Let this win pardon from you, if any is needed.

Affectionately,

Dorothy.

TWENTIETH LETTER.

Boston, June 18th, 1860.

Dear Hester,

Yesterday the exercises in commemoration of the death of our beloved minister were all our hearts could desire.

Music Hall was packed, and the attention of the immense audience was held for full two hours. The stand, or pulpit from which Mr. Parker was wont to preach was buried in flowers. In front of it was a cross of white roses and evergreen. Beside the Bible from which we so often heard our minister read were some of the little flowers he loved best—lilies of the valley.

We fallowed as closely as possible Mr. Parker's wishes in regard to his funeral. The hymns he liked were sung, and one especially he desired by Professor Norton,

“My God, I thank thee! may no thought
E'er deem thy chastisements severe.”

How death unites men of different modes of thought! In its presence how little some of our controversies are!

Three true friends of Mr. Parker spoke to us the words of truth and soberness. Mr. Charles M. Ellis was simple and direct. He held that short as was Mr. Parker's pastorate—that of 15 years—yet the work done was a success. Our minister's life and work were a triumph. Mr. Emerson, whom Mr. Parker was wont to speak of as “a man serene and beautiful as a star,” “this most lovely light,” paid his noble tribute to the memory of our minister. He thought that perhaps more tenderness on the part of Mr. Parker would have been graceful, but he was sincere to the heart's center. His word was the word men would seek after in the future. The closing sentence of Mr. Emerson's address was almost as terrible as any of Mr. Parker's in its condemnation of “polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted

learning and disgraced graces," who are to "rot and be forgotten with their double tongue" whilst the work of our minister has the winds, and stars in their course on its side.

But it was Wendell Phillips who most warmed our blood. It was a tribute worth living for, working for, and if need be dying for. I cannot quote it for you. But the address glowed with light and wept tears of joy and sorrow. Take this : "The blessings of the poor are his laurels. Say that his words won doubt and murmur to trust in a loving God : let that be his record. Say that to the hated and friendless he was a shield and buckler : let that be his epitaph. The glory of children is the father's. When you voted 'that Theodore Parker should be heard in Boston,' God honored you. Well have you kept your pledge. In much labor and with many sacrifices he laid the corner-stone; his work is ended here. God calls you to put on the top-stone. Let fearless lips and Christian lives be his monument." Are not

these words themselves a monument any man might covet? And as they came rolling forth from the lips of the orator they were to us like a stream of golden light. And they are matched by words of the Rev. William R. Alger who spoke in Bulfinch Street Chapel on June 3rd. "In the death of Theodore Parker Truth loses a stalwart champion, humanity a brave friend, poverty and suffering a generous helper, his country an incorruptible patriot, the earthly providence of God an unflinching servant." What a Pleiades that sentence is, and it shines in beauty and truth for our minister!

And, dear Hester, now that I am closing I would my own poor pen could tell what my heart feels. How can I fittingly speak of him who was such a manly man, whose love of God made him ever more the man! I cannot say that all he has written will live, or much of it. But that indefinable something we call personality, that lives; and that person whom we once knew as Theodore Parker cannot die in this world or any other

world. He helped to lay the foundations of the great spiritual temple that is to lift its bright dome above *all* humanity. He best for our time interpreted the great mind of Jesus. He was the fellow of the Christ, both in his indignation and his sweetness. He was the man who in his closeness to God made God felt among men. Who in our day has brought heaven so near to earth? Say you Channing? I say, No. Channing does not kindle, as does our minister, the awful flame of God upon the altars of the heart. Channing's beautiful words will be read, and and they will help. But Parker *himself* will live and move a power among men. His name, not his words alone, will stir to battle for the right, and cause men to stand upon their feet that God may speak to them as his spiritual fellows.

And out of this life comes to you and me another lesson, one we are to teach our children, that is, we are to watch and pray in deep agony lest we persecute a prophet of God to his day. God is not silent today, dear

Hester. He is speaking if we listen. He has his prophets. Let us welcome them.

And with the gloomy times that are upon us and the gloomier times perhaps to come let us hold fast to the truth our minister has long taught us : God is not afar off. Out of sorrow the day of glory will arise. It does seem as if Mr. Parker's words were to come true that we are to enter into a fraternal struggle ; we of the North are to lock horns with the South. God pity us both, and when the strife is over forgive us both and bless us.

The great word of our minister stands forth for us now, and is to be our sun and shield : " God is good."

How precious ! How strong !

Affectionately,

Dorothy.